AN ANALYSIS OF EARLY MISSISSIPPIAN BURIALS FROM MOUND C AT OCMULGEE, GEORGIA

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Honors Thesis
Curriculum in Archaeology
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Vin Steponaitis, for his guidance and encouragement throughout this year-long research project. I am also grateful for the support of my committee members Dr. C. Margaret Scarry and Dr. R.P. Stephen Davis. I would like to especially thank the staff at the Southeast Archaeological Center in Tallahassee – David Morgan, Richard Vernon, Jessica McNeil, and Hannah Marshall – who graciously accommodated my research plans and provided me with all the field notes, photographs, and sketches from the Ocmulgee excavations. A special thanks to Bennie and Elaine Keel, who were the most generous hosts during my trip to Tallahassee; Dorothy Lippert and Christopher Dudar at the Smithsonian Institution for providing invaluable skeletal data; and friends and family that have supported me throughout this process – thank you for your unwavering support.

This project was generously supported by the Michael P. and Jean W. Carter Research Fund administered by Honors Carolina.

ABSTRACT

Rachel Metcalf: An Analysis of Early Mississippian Burials from Mound C at Ocmulgee, Georgia

This thesis analyzes the burial patterns of Mound C, known as the "Funeral Mound," at Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon, GA. Using updated skeletal data from the Smithsonian Institution, this thesis notes patterns of age and sex in the Mound C burials, as well as patterns in burial position (extended, bundled, and flexed), burial type (primary and secondary), and grave good inclusion. The presence of numerous secondary burials and rearticulated burials in Mound C suggests a ritual re-burial process based on reinforcing kin group ties or reconstructing Mississippian creation myths through burial display.

CHAPTER 1
MOUND C: METHODS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

My research focuses on Mound C of Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon, Georgia, and both its construction and burial activity during the early Mississippian Macon Plateau occupation from 900 A.D. to 1150 A.D. (Fairbanks 2003:15 [1956]; Hally 1994:95). Mound C, also referred to as the "Funeral Mound," was a platform mound composed of seven building layers, each capped by hard clay or sand, and a sub-mound layer including burials dug shortly before mound construction. All construction stages were built by the same early Mississippian cultural group (Fairbanks 2003:39), and the people they interred in the mound – their age and sex, their grave goods, their status, and their role in the mortuary ritual – are the focus of this study.

Charles Fairbanks, archaeologist and author of *The Archaeology of the Funeral Mound*, described three possible reasons for periodic mound construction: (1) cyclical additions prescribed by a larger social or ideological system, (2) layers added by a new chief to cover those of their predecessor, or (3) "calendrical arrangement which required periodic rebuilding" (Fairbanks 2003:42). I believe the burial data and treatment of the dead in Mound C most closely reflects reason (1), where periodic ritual reburials and bone-handling of deceased kin reinforced the social hierarchy of an established "elite" descent group included within the mound, and secondary burials were arranged as cosmological displays (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:32).

Research Questions

When I first started reading about Mound C, there were two questions I wanted to answer: what was the structure of Ocmulgee society as reflected in the burial patterns, and what was the significance of so many secondary burials? The primary objective of this thesis is to contribute to the existing research about Ocmulgee archaeology and its inhabitants by providing an analysis and explanation of burial patterns in Mound C. The secondary objective of this research will be to explain the social and ideological systems that are represented in these early Mississippian burials.

Theoretical Approaches to Mortuary Practice

In this thesis, I will apply current Mississippian mortuary theory to the interpretation of the Mound C burials. These current theories were built upon and reference earlier approaches to understand burial patterns. Both Lewis Binford and Arthur Saxe wrote articles in the 1970s that formed this early "representationist" approach to mortuary practice (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:3-4). The representationist approach interpreted burial patterns as reflective of the fullest-achieved social persona, or social role, of an individual at death (cited in Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:3). In "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential" (1970), Binford described variability in mortuary practice and its usefulness in identifying larger social and cultural systems. In simple societies with egalitarian organization, burial treatment would be expected to vary based on age or sex, with more distinction added to burials of individuals who achieved status through contribution to the society. Societies with more complex structure, like Mississippian societies, would have burials that varied less by age and sex, and more by ascribed social distinction and hierarchy (Binford 1970:19-20).

More recent theoretical approaches to Mississippian mortuary practices identify that there are more factors affecting mortuary variability than just hierarchy and the "social persona" (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:5). Burial is a ritual carried out by the living, not the dead, and the social personas represented in burial are not always indicative of someone's true role in society. Instead, burials can be used to construct "cosmograms," or displays of universal origin, where individuals are buried to reflect an ideological, rather than personal, identity (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:46, 48). Status burials and reburial rituals could also be used to reinforce the high status of the living descendants and their own continuity and role in society (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:33). I think the burials in Mound C best fit with these latter theoretical approaches. The presence of individuals of all ages, including children, in the Mound C burials suggests an ascribed system of social hierarchy. Additionally, the amount of secondary burials that were rearticulated or bundled together with elaborate grave goods could represent constructed cosmological displays.

Sources of Skeletal Data

The data used for skeletal analysis was compiled from several sources, three originating from the Smithsonian Institution. Skeletal data, primarily age and sex, was compiled from four different sources: Charles Fairbanks' *Archaeology of the Funeral Mound* (1956), Mary Powell's 1986 report in David Hally's *Ocmulgee Archaeology, 1936-1986* (1994:116-129) and a 2014 skeletal analysis report (Lippert 2014) with osteology lab data (Dudar 2014) from the Smithsonian Institution. In this thesis, I used the most recent age and sex data available, though field notes and Fairbanks' report were still important for describing burials not included in the Smithsonian collection.

The oldest Smithsonian report was Powell's skeletal analysis included in *Ocmulgee Archaeology, 1936-1986*. In 2014, the Smithsonian Institution conducted further skeletal analysis of the Ocmulgee burials to identify and repatriate culturally affiliated remains (Lippert). The mortuary data produced by this report filled in many of the gaps in Fairbanks' report and also provided more accurate age and sex estimates. Data from the Smithsonian's osteology lab (Dudar 2014) additionally lists pathological conditions and identifies remains that have since been re-associated with other burials. While Fairbanks' data included important details from field notes like burial orientation, grave goods, and mound level, the most recent age and sex data published by the Smithsonian are both more reliable and offer more specific age range estimates.

The 2014 Smithsonian skeletal analysis and osteology lab data will be the main source of age and sex data for this report, but as the Smithsonian could only analyze individuals in its own collection, I used information gathered from field notes, photographs, and sketches to fill in the gaps for missing skeletons not collected at excavation, mislabeled in storage, or no longer in the Smithsonian's collection.

CHAPTER 2

OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT AND THE MACON PLATEAU

Ocmulgee National Monument (Figure 1) contains an early Mississippian site, composed of 8 mounds and one earthlodge, in Macon, Georgia (Hally 1994:130). The site is situated on the Macon Plateau, approximately 15 m above the Ocmulgee River floodplain – a notable location considering that most riverside Mississippian sites in the southeast are located in the river's floodplain, not above it. Ocmulgee National Monument covers 0.7 square km of land. It was established as a national monument by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in December 1936 (Hally 1994:23, 84, 94).

My research covers only a brief portion of Ocmulgee occupation, as the site is described as supporting "17,000 years of continuous human occupation" (U.S. National Park Service 2017) beginning with Paleo-Indians and Clovis to historic Creek settlements (Fairbanks 2003:8). The Ocmulgee mounds were first described in 1739 as a site with "three Mounts raised by the Indians over three of their Great Kings who were killed in the Wars" (Hally 1994:15). While historic Creek burials were present in Mound C, mound construction is attributed to early Mississippian occupants. How Mississippian culture arrived in central Georgia will be discussed later in this chapter.

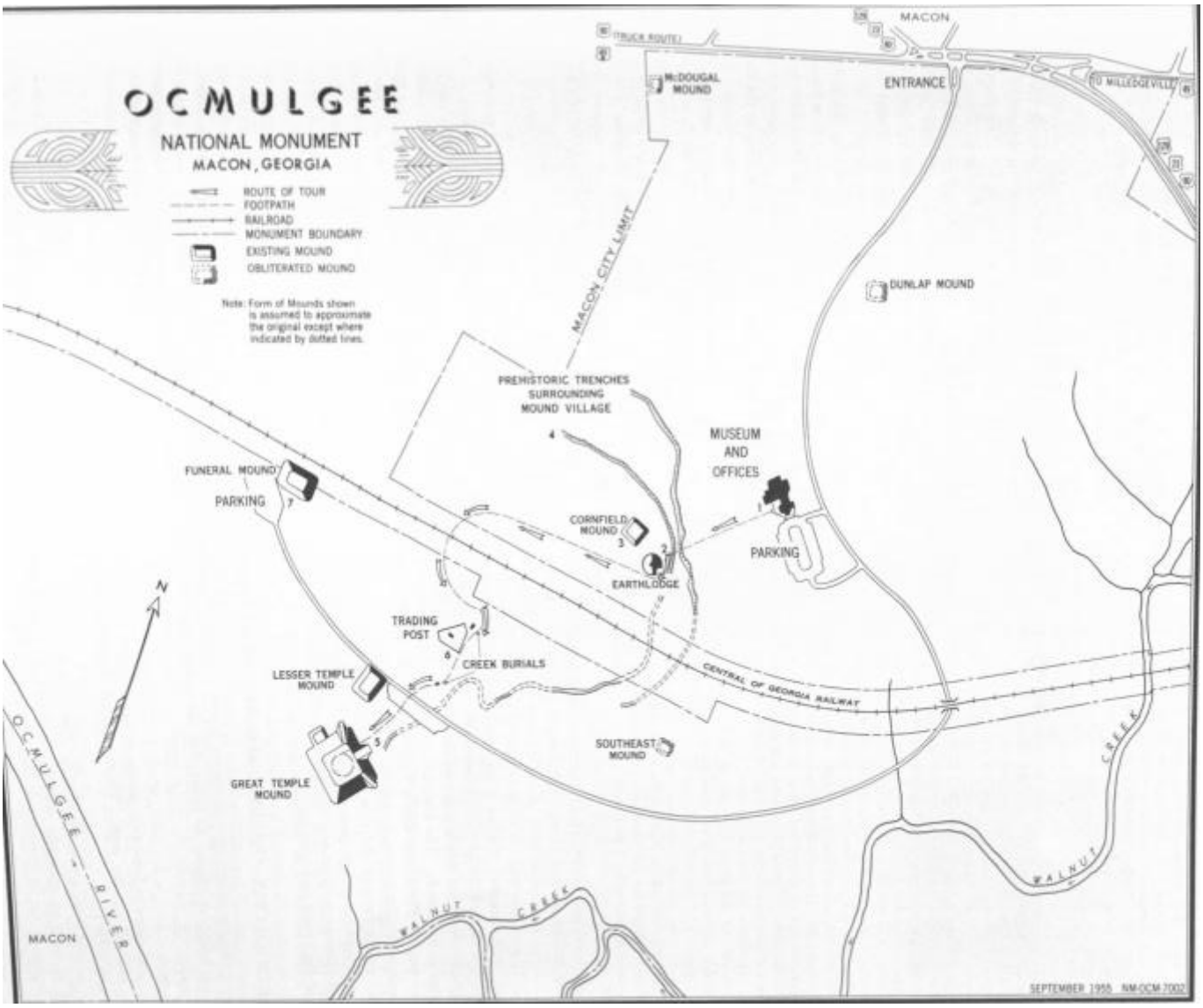

Figure 1. Map of Ocmulgee National Monument[1]

Chronology

Fairbanks described three periods of occupation at Ocmulgee, in relation to Mound C: pre-mound, mound-building, and post-mound (Fairbanks 2003:37). The Middle Woodland

[1] Fairbanks 2003:Figure 2

cultures that existed in central Georgia immediately before Mississippian invasion included Swift Creek and Napier; of the two, Swift Creek was better represented (Fairbanks 2003:Table I). These "Early Farmers," as Fairbanks described them, of the Swift Creek culture had limited agriculture (Fairbanks 2003:11-12). The Swift Creek culture in central Georgia was rapidly pushed out by the arrival of Macon Plateau culture in 900 A.D. Fairbanks described this group as "Master Farmers" for their full maize agriculture and community structure (Fairbanks 2003:15). Modern chronology estimates that early Mississippians arrived later around 950 A.D. and abandoned the site by 1150 A.D. – a brief 200 years of occupation (Hally 1994:95).

Fairbanks identified Ocmulgee as a good example of an early Mississippian site for its three key features: temple mounds, an earth lodge, and Mississippian type pottery and temper (Fairbanks 2003:13). Ocmulgee certainly had early Mississippian mounds, although it cannot be said what types of structures existed atop them, and the only earthlodge at Ocmulgee dates to the Macon Plateau phase, around 1015 A.D. (Wilson 1964:202). Pottery at Ocmulgee was primarily plain and undecorated, but was made with grit or shell temper in a "round base Mississippian type" (Fairbanks 2003:13).

The distance between mounds at Ocmulgee is greater than other larger Mississippian sites, including Moundville in Alabama. At least 250 meters separate each mound on the Macon Plateau, some with much greater distances. The object of this study, Mound C, is located more than 335 m northwest of the largest mound, Mound A, known as the Great Temple Mound (Fairbanks 2003:117). The great distance between Ocmulgee mounds suggests that no central plaza existed at the site. Instead of a central plaza, David Hally and Mark Williams suggested that each mound served as a "nucleus" for separate residential subcommunities (Hally 1994: 94)

Community Organization at Ocmulgee

Despite Fairbanks' description of Ocmulgee as fitting a typical Mississippian site, Ocmulgee was not organized in the same way as later Mississippian settlements. As stated above, the geographic spread of Ocmulgee mounds suggests that there was no central plaza – a defining feature of later Mississippian sites – but rather smaller squares near each mound (Fairbanks 2003:47). Excluding a central plaza was possibly a planned, rather than organic, construction. Mississippian settlements were often planned from the very beginning, including the plaza size, which would be built according to the population size of the site (Pauketat 2007:95).

Also unlike later Mississippian sites, there is little evidence for definite Macon Plateau phase domestic features (Hally 1994:90). The amount of human labor necessary to construct the mounds is at odds with this scanty evidence of domestic features on the plateau (Waring and Holder 1945:22). Fairbanks explained this lack of domestic features by describing Ocmulgee as a residence for priests, chiefs, and important officials, not permanent residence for the entire community (2003:57). He theorized that most of the community would have lived outside the mounds, along the Ocmulgee River where the agricultural fields were planted. The whole community would only come together in times of war, to build mounds and other structures, or to conduct yearly ceremonies (Fairbanks 2003:47, 57). Construction of the Ocmulgee mounds would have required a large workforce, especially since the period of occupation was so short. For Cahokia, the largest mound site in North America, it was estimated that a few thousand people over a few centuries (or about one laborer for less than 2 weeks each year) would be sufficient to construct the mounds (Milner 2004:136).

John Blitz (1999) identified several mound organization patterns. The Macon Plateau is described as an "isolated multiple mound center" where a single political mound center is connected directly to the local community and households, not divided up between auxiliary centers controlled by subchiefs (Blitz 1999:582). Blitz described this pattern of isolated mound centers as specific to the South: "In other words, the spacing of most [Southern Appalachian] centers implies that resource flows were directed to a specific center, and did not pass through a hierarchical chain of subordinate centers centrally organized to support a superordinate regional center" (1999:589).

To summarize, the Macon Plateau is thought to have developed as a simple, isolated chiefdom, where power and resources were centralized and not distributed downward through subchiefs and remote mound centers. Fairbanks did identify a "secondary town" of the early Mississippian phase (Fairbanks 2003:57), likely referring to Brown's Mount, another Macon Plateau site located less than 10 km southeast of Macon. Hally hypothesized that mound centers located less than 18 km apart belonged to the same polity (cited by Blitz 1999:580). By this definition, Brown's Mount should be included as part of the Ocmulgee/Macon Plateau polity (Wilson 1964:202).

Invasion or Isolated Development: Emergence of the Macon Plateau

Occupational changes at Ocmulgee have been explained using several different theoretical approaches, often changing with major shifts in archaeological theory. Interpretation of the site in the 1930s was that the Macon Plateau culture in central Georgia was a result of human migration or "invasion" of Mississippian people (Hally 1994:131). Supporters of the migration theory pointed to ceramic similarities between eastern Tennessee sites in Norris Basin

and Ocmulgee, and to the apparent dissimilarity between Swift Creek ceramics (precursor to the Macon Plateau phase) and the subsequent Bibb Plain styles of the early Mississippian period. Both Fairbanks and Gordon Willey, two archaeologists who worked extensively with Ocmulgee data, were convinced of the migration theory based on this ceramic evidence (Hally 1994:131).

With the arrival of New Archaeology in the 1960s, however, there was a shift in the interpretation of the Macon Plateau emergence. After years of interpreting Mississippian growth and cultural change primarily as a product of population movement (Blitz 1999:590), archaeologists revisited the theory of Mississippian emergence at Ocmulgee. Instead of migration, archaeologists argued that cultural development or diffusion of Mississippian culture in central Georgia could have resulted in the early Mississippian society at Ocmulgee. Another argument pointed out that Ocmulgee was abandoned and never reoccupied by Mississippian peoples, despite a common trend for sacred mound sites to be periodically abandoned and reoccupied later, and it implied that Ocmulgee was never reoccupied because later Mississippians had no cultural connection to the site (Hally 1994:137).

But in the late twentieth century, archaeologists again favored the migration theory, based on ceramic evidence and limited connection between the Macon Plateau phase and both previous and following cultural materials. The current theoretical interpretation favors a "balanced approach" (Hally 1994:137) to migration and development, where migration does not have to be the explanation for all Mississippian sites, but also cannot be automatically ruled out for sites like Ocmulgee. I believe this current argument for migration is stronger and more comprehensively explains such a rapid change in cultural materials that are completely unlike Swift Creek predecessors, abruptly appear and disappear after 250 years of occupation, and show

no evidence of local acculturation or influence. The Mound C burials then likely represent a group of individuals who migrated to central Georgia for some reason.

The Macon Plateau was abandoned around 1150 A.D. for reasons unknown, but several theories exist to explain the rapid abandonment (Hally 1994:95) Some state that the site was abandoned and not reoccupied for a long time because of "lingering fear of the place" or was avoided because of the cultural taboos practiced by the Macon Plateau people (Pauketat 2007:115). Other theories consider warfare as the catalyst for rapid Mississippian occupation and abandonment (Blitz 1999:580). I think that environmental factors, like severe drought or over-cultivation of agricultural fields, should also be considered, especially for a community that relied on subsistence agriculture (Fairbanks 2003:47).

Excavation History

Excavations at Ocmulgee began in December 1933 and lasted until 1942 (Hally 1994:17). Excavations were funded over the years by several of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The first excavations at Ocmulgee were funded as a project of the Civil Works Administration (CWA). From 1934 to 1937, Ocmulgee excavations were funded by several different federal relief programs, first as a Federal Emergency Relief Administration project (FERA), then as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, and finally as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project in 1937 (Hally 1994:17-23). During this period of excavations, the city of Macon and local residents identified a need to preserve the Ocmulgee archaeological site and raised money to purchase the necessary lands for federal preservation (Hally 1994:19). In December 1936, three years after the first excavations began, Ocmulgee National Monument was established by presidential proclamation (Hally 1994:23)

Arthur R. Kelly was chosen as director of the first Ocmulgee excavations. James A. Ford, a then-undergraduate with several years field experience, was chosen as Kelly's assistant (Hally 1994:17). Early field notes include observations from both Kelly and Ford. In June 1936, Ocmulgee hosted a small group of graduate students for a summer field school. One of those graduate students, Gordon Willey, was asked to stay on as Kelly's assistant after the summer ended. Willey would later become the senior foreman archaeologist during the CCC project. Charles Fairbanks, whose research on Mound C is referenced throughout this thesis, took over as Ocmulgee's CCC senior foreman archaeologist in 1938 (Hally 1994:21-23, 25).

Mound C Excavation

The 1930s Mound C excavation area was roughly 200 feet east-west by 150 feet north-south. Excavation units in the mound were 5- by 5-foot units, and test pits in village area adjacent to the mound were 5- by 10-foot units. North and south excavation trenches were also cut into the mound and an area now under a paved parking lot (Fairbanks 2003:20). Figure 2 shows the limits of the Mound C excavation (edited from SEAC ACC 123 FB). Only a 20-foot interior section of the mound remains intact (Fairbanks 2003:20).

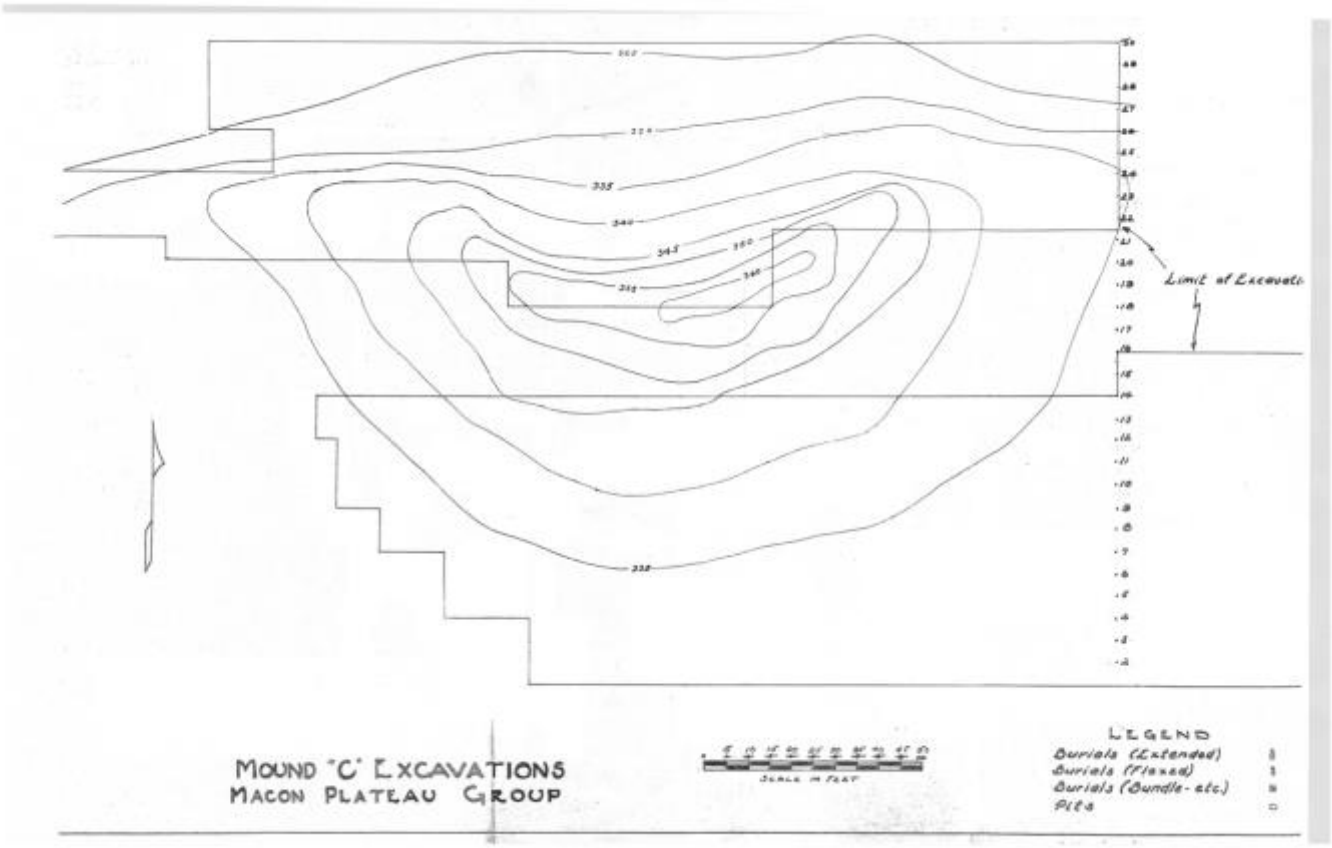

Figure 2. Map of excavation limits.[2]

Railroad Construction. Long before excavations began, railroad construction in the 19th century partially destroyed Mound C and Mound B, known as the Lesser Temple Mound. The Central of Georgia railroad made two east-west cuts through the Macon Plateau: one cut south of the earthlodge, and another just north of Mound A and Mound B (Figure 3). Mound C was also cut through on the northeast face by the railroad (Fairbanks 2003:17). The cut faces of the mounds revealed burials and cultural materials.

[2] Edited from SEAC ACC 123 FB

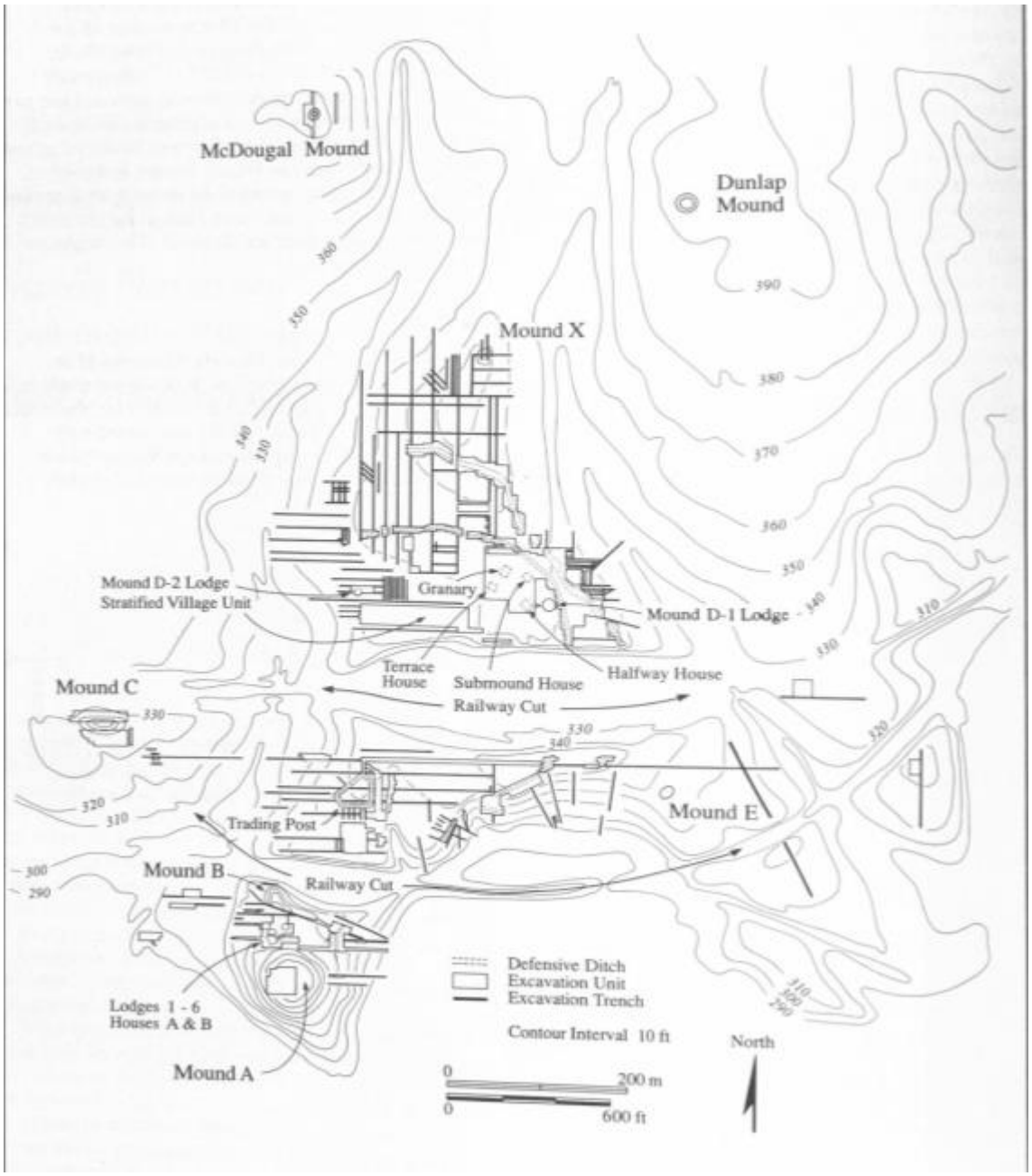

Figure 3. Site map with railroad cuts.[3]

Excavation Issues. Federal programs at Ocmulgee hired unskilled laborers to assist with excavation. Kelly formed an archaeological night school to train some of the workers in more

[3] Hally 1994:Illustration 8.2

specific field positions, but many workmen were still unskilled in archaeological field work and recordkeeping (Hally 1994:18). The limited number of professional archaeologists on site contributed to poor field records, and poor provenience control post-excavation caused many notes, photographs, and artifacts to disappear, making it difficult for later archaeologists to accurately describe the results of excavation (Hally and Rudolph 1986:9, 32-33).

CHAPTER 3
MOUND C BURIALS

There are at least seven identifiable levels of construction in Mound C, as well as a sub-mound level predating mound construction and several layers that can only be roughly dated to mound-building activities. In total, 98 prehistoric burials were spread throughout one pre-mound level, seven construction levels, and several undefined levels. In this section, I will describe all the mound levels associated with the Macon Plateau period, beginning with the sub-mound level and ending with Mound VII, the seventh and final construction level of Mound C.

Each section will include a description of the related burials, grave goods, and mound structures of that level. I will also describe those burials not assigned a specific mound level. Information about the burials was compiled from field notes, Fairbanks' 1956 report *Archaeology of the Funeral Mound*, and the most recent Smithsonian skeletal evaluations (when available). Specific references to field notes and the Smithsonian skeletal analyses are included separately in the mound level tables. Every burial described references information from "Table IV. Summary of Burials" (Fairbanks 2003:89-90).

Sub-mound

The first layer of interest falls in the "sub-mound" category. The sub-mound area of Mound C represents burials made shortly before construction of the mound began, and likely represent a previous village area. Field notes mention dark soil and post holes in the sub-mound area, but these features were unmapped, and therefore, useless in defining what type of structure existed (Fairbanks 2003:21). In the sub-mound area, six burials were recorded with a minimum of 17 individuals: 48 A & B; 49 A, B, C, & D; 50 A & B; 68; 69; and 71 (Table 1). Of these six

burials, five were described as log tombs. Half the burials in the sub-mound area contain grave goods, many very elaborate. In general, the burials in this area are more elaborate than burials in subsequent levels. Fairbanks describes this difference in elaboration as indication of the changing social importance of individuals, not changing cultures (Fairbanks 2003:39).

Table 1. Sub-mound Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
48 A & B	B & E	S, S	A: A (18-22), B: A (20-25)	M, M	Yes	Dudar 2014:CN* 385858 and 385868; SEAC ACC** #123 Vol. 3:49
49 A, B, C, D	E	All S	A (20-35), C (4-6), C (9-13), J (11-14)	M, I, I, I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385852, 385853, 385853A, 385853B
50 A & B	E, E	P, P	A, A	I, I	--	SEAC ACC #123 Vol. 3:53
68	E	S	A (20-35)	M	Yes	SEAC ACC #123 Vol. 3:89, 90; Dudar 2014:CN 385855, 385830, and 385831
69	3 E, 4 B	All S	A (40+), A (25-40), J (12-15), C (1-2.5), C (5-7), J (10-14), C (5-7)	PM, I, PM, I, I, I, I	Yes	Dudar 2014: CN 385860, 385860A, 385860B, 385860C, 385861, 385859A, 385859B; SEAC 1931-1936:91
71	E	S	A (40+)	PM	--	SEAC ACC 123 Vol 3:95; Dudar 2014:CN 385856

Position: B = Bundled, E = Extended
Type: S = Secondary, P = Primary
Age: A = Adult, J = Juvenile, C = Child
Sex: M = Male, PM= Probable Male, F = Female, PF = Probable Female, I = Indeterminate
* CN = catalogue number in Smithsonian inventory. Corresponds to skeletal remains.
** SEAC ACC #123 = Southeastern Archaeological Center archival documents. Includes original field notes, sketches, and photographs.

Three burials in this level contain multiple interments. The sub-mound area contains numerous children and juveniles, always buried with at least one adult individual. Dudar's osteology report (2014) identified at least 17 individuals buried in the Sub-Mound area. All individuals were males, probable males, or indeterminate – no females were identified. Nine of the individuals were identified as adults (18+), and eight were identified as either juveniles or children, ranging from 1-15 years of age. The youngest adult was 18, and the oldest were at least 40 years old at the time of death.

Burial 48 A & B contained a double burial of two young adult males buried in a log tomb. Skeletal analysis notes recorded 48-B as "large and robust…indicating a high level of physical activity." The male in 48-B was 20-25 years old and buried in a rearticulated extended position, and the male in 48-A was 18-22 years old buried in a bundle. Burial 48-B contained numerous beads: 387 barrel-shaped beads and 17,582 disc beads. Comingled remains and inaccurately recorded provenience information made the identification of the two individuals complicated, and previous estimates recorded a probable female in Burial 48 that has since been unassociated with that burial.[4]

Burial 49 was a log tomb containing individuals A, B, C, and D, including an adult male aged 20-35 and three subadults of indeterminate sex, aged 4-6, 9-13, and 11-14. The original field notes only list three individuals for Burial 49 (A, B, and C), an adult and two juveniles, but further skeletal analysis by the Smithsonian identified a fourth individual. All the individuals

[4] Burial 48 was one of the most complicated burials to accurately determine the age, sex, and position of the individuals. Field notes first recorded Burial 48 as a "double extended burial" (SEAC 1931-1936:49) with reference to Photograph #105 and Sketch #29. But Photograph #105 identified 48-A as an extended burial of an adult female aged 25 years and 48-B as a bundle burial (48-A is now recorded as the bundle burial, and 48-B is recorded as rearticulated extended). Sketch #29 also labeled 48-A as the extended burial and 48-B as the bundle burial (SEAC ACC 123 Vol. 2:Sketch 29). The labels must have been switched during Fairbanks' analysis of the burials, possibly as an error. The most recent skeletal analysis by the Smithsonian refers to Burial 48-B as an extended male, and identifies Burial 48-A as the bundled male.

were possibly rearticulated, not uncommon in the sub-mound area. No grave goods were recorded. The subadult aged 11-14 had hypoplastic defects and large carious lesions.

Burial 50 A & B was the only burial described in the sub-mound level that contained two fully extended (non-rearticulated) individuals. These are the only remains from the sub-mound level that are not included in SI inventory and could not be reassessed for more specific age and sex data.[5] The log tomb burial contained two adults of indeterminate sex, buried with no grave goods. Field notes indicate that the two individuals were buried closely together, possibly wrapped in a skin or bark covering. Fairbanks described the burial as a log tomb.

Burial 68 was also described as a log tomb. It contained an adult male aged 20-35 with pathological evidence of mild foot trauma, slight osteoarthritis, and stress lesions at the clavicle and tibia. The individual was buried in a rearticulated extended position with 14 shell beads on the right side. Burial 68 was likely a ceremonial reburial; the field notes state that flesh was scraped from the bones which then were painted with red oxide, and finally rearticulated and wrapped in skins. In addition to Burial 68, two additional finds contained human remains. Finds 66 and 67 were located closely to Burial 68, but were found outside of the log tomb. Find 66 contained two vertebrae and two foot bones of an adult of indeterminate age and sex, and Find 67 contained very fragmentary remains of an adult of indeterminate sex. Fairbanks referred to these two finds as possible retainer burials to Burial 68 (Fairbanks 2003:24).

Burial 69 contained the most remains with at least seven individuals, including two adults and five subadults. One adult was at least 40 years old and a probable male. The second adult was between 25-40 years old of indeterminate sex and had linear hypoplasia. A probable male subadult aged 12-15 had trauma to the right arm. A subadult aged 5-7 of indeterminate sex had

[5] The remains from Burial 50 A & B were not collected at the time of excavation. Field notes state, "Bones very badly deteriorated, which were Re-interred" (SEAC 1931-1936:53).

linear enamel hypoplasia. A second subadult also aged 5-7 had large carious lesions and linear hypoplasia, and a subadult aged 10-14 had faint linear hypoplasia and inflammation/infection to two fingers. Three individuals were buried extended, and four were buried bundle. The articulation of the 12 to 15-year-old subadult means it was likely one of the three extended individuals. Burial 69 contained a variety of grave goods and a large volume of shell beads. In all, one shell gorget, 26,000 olivella beads, two "discoidals," three bone pins, and one conch dipper were recorded. Field notes listed an additional object, a celt (Find #65), with the burial goods.

Burial 71 was the only burial in the sub-mound level not described as a log tomb. Burial 71 contained a probable male at least 40 years of age buried in a rearticulated extended position. Field notes contain little description of the burial. Field notes only describe the burial as "Bones in bad state of decay." Field notes also recorded the burial as a bundle, but a later handwritten note by Fairbanks said that was an error. Photographs of Burial 71 show an extended burial. Skeletal analysis recorded that two teeth were lost antemortem, and the burial contained comingled subadult remains. No grave goods were recorded for this burial.

Mound I

Mound construction began after the completion of the sub-mound burials. Despite the elaborate and packed interments of the sub-mound level, no burials were excavated from Mound I (Hally 1994:119). Excavators identified a stepped ramp on the western slope of Mound I that could suggest the mound was originally oriented with the cardinal directions (Hally 1994:88). A posthole from some type of mound-top structure was described, but not mapped; Fairbanks theorized that this single, large post served some type of ritual function, and was more often

associated with burial mounds than temple mounds (Fairbanks 2003:24).[6] Overall, Mound I provided no pertinent burial information.

Mound II

In Mound II, excavators recorded seven burials: 43, 52, 59, 65, 67, 75, and 77 (Fairbanks 2003:25). Table 2 lists these burials. Mound II burials are different from other levels in that almost all the burials were recorded as extended.[7] Previous and subsequent levels have a more equal mix of bundled and extended burials. While four of the burials from Mound II contained grave goods, they were generally less elaborate than the sub-mound burials. Age and sex data for Mound II is much less complete than the sub-mound level. Of seven individuals buried, three could be aged, but none could be definitively sexed. All three aged individuals were identified as adults.

Table 2. Mound II Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
43	E	P	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:41
52	E?	S	--	--	--	
59	E	P	A (18-35)	I	Yes	Fairbanks 2003:27; Dudar 2014:CN 385867
65	E	P	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:87
67	E	P	A (45+)	I	Yes	Dudar 2014:CN 385854A; SEAC 1931-1936:87

[6] Fairbanks based this theory on similar post holes that have been found at other southern mound sites including Crooks Site, Marksville, and Kolomoki (Fairbanks 2003:25).

[7] Fairbanks noted that a photo of Burial 52, recorded as extended, showed a bundle burial instead (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV); however, a unit sketch from field notes shows an extended burial (SEAC 1931-1936:57).

Table 2. Mound II Burials, Continued.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
75	E	S	A	I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:103
77	--	--	--	--	Yes	

Burials 43, 52, 65, and 77 had no associated age or sex data. The only information available for these burials is compiled from field notes and Fairbanks' interpretations. Field notes for Burial 43 indicate that the remains were very decayed and reinterred after excavation. Grave goods included a broken "crude clay effigy" (what Fairbanks referred to as an unfired clay mass) and a few pot sherds (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV). Burial 52 contained no grave goods, and field notes did not describe the remains. Burial 65 also lacked grave goods and a description of the fragmentary remains, but field notes indicate that Burial 65 cut through the torso of Burial 67, and so was possibly buried after Burial 67. Burial 77 was not described in the field notes, but Fairbanks said the burial contained beads, shell, and a shredded white substance (possibly wood) in his burial remarks (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV).

Burials 59, 67, and 75 had partial age and sex data. Burial 59 contained the remains of an adult of indeterminate sex, aged 18-35 years, buried with a Halstead Plain effigy bottle. The bottle was a gourd-shaped vessel with two ridges representing ears near the opening of the bottle (Fairbanks 2003:27). Burial 67 contained the remains of an adult of indeterminate sex, at least 45 years old, and was cut through the torso by Burial 65. Grave goods included a large number of olivella shell beads found around the legs. The individual in Burial 67 had arthritis of both tempomandibular joints, and a benign tumor on the frontal bone of the skull. Burial 75 was simply listed as an adult in Fairbanks' report, but the remains are not in the Smithsonian

inventory and could not be reassessed for more specific estimates. Field notes only show a sketch of the burial, but Fairbanks described it as “fragmentary, rearticulated on back” (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV).

Mound III

The surface of Mound III contained evidence of some type of mound-type structure, possibly a shelter protecting against mound-top erosion. Fairbanks noted an increase in the number of bundle burials in this level; of the five burials recorded, three were categorized as bundles (Fairbanks 2003:28-29). Mound III provided little demographic information. It included Burials 20, 21, 25, 40, and 64 (Table 3), none of which were included in any of the recent Smithsonian skeletal analyses. Excavation notes recorded age and sex estimates only for two burials: 25 and 64. Burial 25 contained the remains of an adult male, initially recorded as a bundle burial, but Fairbanks noted that the placement of long bones could indicate it was extended. Burial 64 contained the bundled remains of a child. Field notes indicate that the remains were so severely decomposed that they were reinterred.

Table 3. Mound III Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
20	E	P	--	--	--	
21	B	S	--	--	--	
25	E?	P	A	M	--	SEAC 1931-1936:16
40	B	C?	--	--	Yes	
64	B	S	C	C	--	SEAC 1931-1936:81

Burials 20 and 21were buried closely together. Burial 20 was extended while Burial 21 was a bundle. Neither contained grave goods. Burial 40 was the only Mound III burial to contain grave goods; the cremated remains of an indeterminate individual were buried with a small pot and mussel shell. The increase of bundle burials in this level compared with the majority extended burials in Mound II could suggest that a series of ritual reburials had taken place.

Mound IV

Mound IV contained eight interments: one double burial and seven single burials. Burials 12, 22, 29, 37, 38, 62, 66, and 70 are included in this level (Table 4). Poor bone preservation and fragmentary remains made it difficult to extract much information from this level. Only three of the burials (12, 29, and 37) could be more specifically aged and sexed. Burial 12 contains the bundled remains of two adults, both probable males, aged 20-35 and 25-40. No grave goods were recorded. There was one additional individual identified near Burial 12 that was not assigned a burial number and is simply referred to as "Near Burial 12." Overall, three burials were bundled, including Burial 12's double burial, and three were extended.

Table 4. Mound IV Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
12	B	P & S	A (20-35), A (25-40)	PM, PM	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385839
Near 12	--	--	A (30+)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385822
22	B	S	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:14
29	B	S	J (13-18)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN385825
37	--	P	J (11-15)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385865
38	E	P	A	I	Yes	
62	E	P	J	I	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:77
66	E	P	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:85
70	--	--	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:93

Burials 29 and 37 contained the remains of juveniles. Burial 29 contained the bundled remains of a juvenile aged 13-18. Burial 37 contained teeth and mandible fragments of a juvenile aged 11-15. No burial position was recorded. Neither Burials 29 or 37 contained grave goods.

Two additional burials, 38 and 62, were assigned age estimates at the time of excavation, but were not included in any later Smithsonian skeletal evaluations. Both contained grave goods. Burial 38 is described as an extended burial of an adult of indeterminate sex. Fairbanks' burial remarks only say, "On back. Conch shell and muller above bones" (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV). A conch shell placed above remains also occurred in sub-mound Burial 69 (Hally 1994:Illustration 11.3). Burial 62 contained an extended juvenile buried with four pebbles and two oval mullers, but it was reinterred at excavation.

The remaining three burials, Burials 22, 66, and 70, were not assigned age and sex estimates, and none were buried with grave goods. Fairbanks first described Burial 22 as "a refuse, rather than a burial, pit" (Fairbanks 2003:29), but later listed it as a bundle burial in Table IV of the appendix. Field notes only say that a short piece of bone was found that could possibly have been deposited by water and make no mention of a bundle burial. Burial 66 was described as extended and the badly decayed bones were reinterred. Burial 70 had no recorded position, and no bones were described in the field notes.

Mound -V and Mound V

There were several mound levels described by Fairbanks that do not fit neatly into the construction timeline. One of those vague construction levels was Mound -V, or a group of burials that "can be dated as being no later than the construction of the fifth mound stage," although some could be much earlier (Fairbanks 2003:32). Seven burials were recorded in this level: 32, 42, 44, 45, 51, 55, and 63 (Table 5). Of the seven burials associated with this level, only two have any type of age or sex data recorded. Most of the skeletal remains from this level were fragmentary or reinterred. Burial 32 contained a 16-25 year old individual of indeterminate sex, and Burial 44 contained two adult males, one aged 30-50 and the other of indeterminate age. Unlike previous levels, Mound -V contained no grave goods in any burial.

Table 5. Mound -V/V Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
15	B	S	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:11
19	B	S	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:13
24	E & B	P, S, S	I, I, I	I, I, I	--	Lippert 2014:34
32	--	--	A (16-25)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385826
35	E	P	A	F	--	SEAC 1931-1936:25
42	E	P	--	--	--	
44	B	S, S	A (30-50), I	PM, PM	--	Lippert 2014:34
45	B	S	--	--	--	
51	--	--	--	--	--	
55	B	S	--	--	--	
57	B?	S	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:67; SEAC 1934:7
63	F?	P	--	--	--	

While Mound -V lacked more complete skeletal description and elaborate burials common in the earlier levels, Mound V contained the only Mound C burial with elaborate copper adornments: Burial 57. The other four burials, 15, 19, 24, and 35, did not contain any grave goods (Table 5). Of these five burials, only two had age and sex estimates. Burial 24 contained three indeterminately aged and sexed individuals, with evidence of some adult remains and some male remains. Burial 35 contained the extremely disintegrated remains of an extended adult female.

Burials 15, 19, and 57 were not assigned any age or sex estimates. Burial 15 was described as a disintegrated bundle burial, and Burial 19 contained only fragmentary pieces of bone that were reinterred. Burial 57 was also unable to be aged or sexed; only two pieces of long bone were recovered from the burial. The grave goods for Burial 57, however, were well described. Between the two long bones, excavators removed two pieces of a copper plate and copper-covered puma jaws. Other burial features included remnant matting and possibly animal fur (Fairbanks 2003:31). Field notes suggested that Burial 57 had some type of log or wood covering, possibly a log tomb. Evidence of a trench and charcoal on the mound platform suggests that a larger structure or palisade existed on the summit of Mound V (Fairbanks 2003:30).

In *Ocmulgee Archaeology: 1936-1986,* a skeletal analysis by Mary L. Powell stated that Mound V contained the most burials, "14 interments containing a minimum of 17 individuals" (Powell 1994:123); however, Fairbanks records only five burials associated with Mound V. It is possible that Powell included the seven burials from Mound -V in her description of Mound V. Since the levels seem to occur closely in time, I will also include Mound -V and Mound V together as a single level during burial analysis.

Mound VI and Mound VII

The increase in burial activity recorded in both Mound -V and Mound V was short-lived. The final two construction levels, Mound VI and Mound VII contained only one burial each. The only burial recorded for Mound VI is Burial 60, a bundle burial containing three individuals (Table 6). Both Powell and Lippert (2014) identified these remains as three adults; however, Powell recorded one male and two females, while Lippert recorded no sex estimations for any of

the individuals. Field notes indicate that the burial contained a pile of long bones with 4-5 decayed lower jaws, with possible evidence of upper skulls present at burial. The field notes stated that the inclusion of skulls was notable because most bundle burials in Mound C excluded skulls.

Table 6. Mound VI Burial.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
60	B	S, S, S	A, A, A	I, I, I	--	Lippert 2014:35; Hally 1994:123; SEAC 1934:34

The only recorded burial in Mound VII is Burial 58, an extended burial with no grave goods. It contained the poorly preserved remains of an individual aged 12-20 of indeterminate sex. The individual was described as an adolescent in field notes. The most recent Smithsonian analysis identified linear hypoplasia.

Table 7. Mound VII Burial.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
58	E	P	J (12-20)	I	--	SEAC 1934:18; Dudar 2014:CN 385868A

Village Site

Adjacent to, but not included within, Mound C was an area with some features, including refuse pits, trenches, and burned-clay "floors" (Fairbanks 2003:34), and both Macon Plateau and historic Creek burials. This area was identified as the Village Site and included Burials 38-1, 38-2, 38-3, 41-1, and 41-2 (Table 8). Field notes suggested a possible chronological link between

the sub-mound burials and the Village Site, but had no definitive evidence for that claim (SEAC 1934:23-24). Burials 38-1, 38-2, and 38-3 were described and mapped in notes. Only Burial 38-3 contained grave goods. Burials 38-1 and 38-2 were both extended burials of indeterminate adults located approximately 2.5 feet below the surface. Both remains were poorly preserved, and Burial 38-1 was additionally damaged by a "road machine."[8]

Table 8. Village Site Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
38-1	E	P	A	I	--	SEAC ACC Vol. 10:137-141
38-2	E	P	A	I	--	SEAC ACC Vol. 10:137-141
38-3	F	P	A	I	Yes	SEAC ACC Vol. 10:137-141
41-1	F	P	A	I	--	
41-2	B	S	--	--	--	

Burial 38-3 contained an indeterminate adult buried partially flexed on the right side. Grave goods included a Bibb Plain pot, a clay pipe, a celt, and several shell objects. Many of the flexed remains in the Village Site were associated with historic burials, but the presence of the Bibb Plain pot in this burial connected it chronologically to the Macon Plateau phase at Ocmulgee (Fairbanks 2003:35). An unidentified animal jaw bone was found just above the human skull, and several flint flakes were found just below the flexed legs.

[8] Burials 38-1, 38-2, and 38-3 were located near or within the current parking area adjacent to Mound C. Burials 38-1 and 38-3 were damaged during road and parking area construction. (SEAC 1934:137).

New Sod and Old Sod.

Some mound areas could only be roughly dated to mound-building activities or post-construction periods. The Old Sod level was associated with the mound-building period, while the New Sod level most likely represented later developments following Mound C erosion and historic occupation of the site (Fairbanks 2003:34). The Old Sod level contained Burials 41, 53, 56, and 61 (Table 9).[9] Half the burials were bundled, half were extended, and half contained grave goods. Burial 41 was a fragmentary extended burial of an indeterminate adult with one small pot sherd located near the body. Burial 53 contained the extended remains of an indeterminate individual found with shell beads lying across the lower leg. Burial 56 was a bundle burial with only one bone and a few teeth. Burial 61 was also a bundle burial, described in field notes as an "intrusive burial." It contained four Bibb Plain sherds.

Table 9. Old Sod Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
41	E	P	A	I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:37
53	E	S	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:59
56	B	S	--	--	--	
61	B	P	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:75

Burials in the New Sod level could have been intrusive to the completed mound, but the inclusion of several Macon Plateau grave goods suggests that at least some New Sod burials

[9] Several other burials, including Burials 31, 34, 36, and 39, were associated with the Old Sod, but Fairbanks identified them as "possibly historic" (Table IV). I excluded them from this analysis. The remaining burials listed for the Old Sod level, Burials 41, 53, 56, and 61, were either dated by Fairbanks to the mound-building period or were not explicitly listed as possibly historic.

represent burial activity by the mound builders. There are four burials included in the New Sod: 46, 47, 54, and 72 (Table 10). All but one burial contains grave goods. Burial 46 was a possible cremation burial with a variety of grave goods, including a Bibb Plain jar, shell beads, and two shell spoons. Field notes describe the burial as "Sub Mound," located approximately three feet below Mound I base. Fairbanks also described a bark cover over the burial. Besides the possible cremation, Burial 46 appears similar to burials from the sub-mound level. Burials 47 and 72 were both extended burials with grave goods. Burial 47 contained an indeterminate adult, approximately six feet in length. Fairbanks identified in Table IV that Burial 47 included grave goods, but he did not describe them in his adjacent burial remarks or mound level descriptions (2003:34). Field notes do not describe grave goods for Burial 47 either.

Burial 72 was an indeterminate individual buried 53 inches below the mound base – described as "Sub Mound"– and contained a large celt stylistically similar to other Macon Plateau period celts (Fairbanks 2003:34). Burial 54 was the only burial of the New Sod level not to include grave goods. It was a skull-only burial that was later reinterred. Burials 47, 54, 72 were all excavated on the South face of Mound C, while Burial 46 was located on the North face. Based on the associated Macon Plateau cultural objects and their "Sub Mound" distinction, I think Burials 46 and 72 can be considered more firmly dated to the Macon Plateau phase at Ocmulgee, and not intrusive historic interments.

Table 10. New Sod Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
46	F	C?	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:45
47	E	P	A	I	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:47
54	B	S	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:61
72	E	S	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:97

Group I and Group II

In addition to Old Sod and New Sod levels, Fairbanks described two classes of inclusive mound pits: Group I, "those lying under the water-deposited sandy wash from the mound stages," and Group II, "those which penetrated that [sandy] wash but do not reach as high up as the humus cover of the mound" (Fairbanks 2003:33). The sandy wash began forming at the base of Mound II, and the humus layer refers to the thick soil covering over the completed mound (Fairbanks 2003:Figure 3). By my estimate, Group I burials would have been dug before the sand cap of Mound II or Mound III was added, and Group II burials must have at least been dug after Mound II but before the completion of Mound VII.

Table 11. Group I Burial.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
80	E	P	A (18+)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385823

Group I (Table 11) contained only Burial 80, a single extended burial of an indeterminate adult of at least 18 years. Group II contained four burials: 27, 86 A & B, 87, and 88 (Table 12).

All the burials in this group were recorded as extended. Both Burials 27 and 88 contained single interments of adult males; Burial 27 contained an individual 35-50 years, and Burial 88 contained an individual 20-35 years. Grave goods in Burial 27 included a white chalky substance and decayed wood. Burial 86 A & B was a double burial of two extended adult individuals of indeterminate sex. Although no grave goods were recorded, this burial was notable for the arrangement of the individuals. 86 A & B were buried in opposite directions with the head of 86 A toward the west, and the head of 86 B toward the east. This arrangement is unique in Mound C. Burial 87 contained an individual with no age or sex estimates. Fairbanks indicated that it contained grave goods, but the field notes are blank.

Table 12. Group II Burials.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
27	E	P	A (35-50)	M	Yes	Dudar 2014:CN 385846 SEAC 1931-1936:17
86 A & B	E, E	P, P	A, A	I, I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:125
87	E	P	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:126
88	E	P	A (20-35)	M	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385857

Burials with no associated level

There were a number of burials in Fairbanks's report that were not associated with a specific mound level. I include these burials for their age and sex data, notable grave goods, and for a more complete description of the Mound C burials. There were 21 burials recorded with no assigned mound level: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 23, 26, 28, 73, 74, 76, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, and 89 (Table 13). Of these burials, five contained grave goods, seven contained adult remains,

and three contained child remains. Only two individuals could be sexed, one male and one female. The remaining individuals were both unaged and unsexed.

Table 13. Burials with No Level Recorded.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
7	--	--	A	I	--	
8	E	P	A	I	--	
9	PF	P	C	I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:8
10	E	P	A	I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:8
11	E	P	C (2-3)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385838; SEAC 1931-1936:9
13	B	S	--	--	--	SEAC 1931-1936:10
14	E	P	A (30+)	PF	Yes	Dudar 2014:CN 385829
16	E	P	C (9-12)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385841
18	B	S	A (30-50)	I	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385843
23	B	S	--	--	--	
26	E	P	A (30-45)	M	--	Dudar 2014:CN 385845
28	E	P	--	--	--	
73	B	S	--	--	--	
74	F	P	A	I	--	SEAC 1931-1936:101
76	--	--	--	--	Yes	Fairbanks 2003:Plate 17; SEAC 1931-1936:105
81	B	S	--	--	Yes	

Table 13. Burials with No Level Recorded, Continued.

Burial no.	Position	Type	Age	Sex	Grave goods	References
82	B?	C?	--	--	--	
83	E	P	--	--	--	
84	E	P	--	--	--	
85	--	--	--	--	Yes	
89	E	P	--	--	Yes	SEAC 1931-1936:129

Burials 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 26, and 74 were assigned either age or sex estimates. Burial 7 was a skull of an adult of indeterminate sex. Burial 8 was an extended burial of an indeterminate adult. Burial 9 contained a child buried in a circular pit. Fairbanks described the burial as partly flexed, but field notes are less certain: "Apparently body was lying out straight, but on account of condition of bones could not determine if legs were flexed seemed to be on back" (SEAC 1931-1936:8).

Burial 10 contained the extended burial of an indeterminate adult in very poor condition. Burial 11 was an extended burial of a child aged 2-3 years that had carious lesions. Burial 16 contained an extended child aged 9-12. Burial 18 contained a skull-only burial of an indeterminate adult aged 30-50. Burial 26 was an extended burial of an adult male aged 30-45. Burial 74 contained an adult of indeterminate sex with legs partly flexed to the right.

Although they cannot be confidently assigned to a specific mound level, there are notable grave goods among these burials. Burial 14 contained a probable female of at least 30 years buried with hundreds of shell beads located along the neck and legs and one pot. Burial 76 contained a Halstead Plain effigy bottle very similar to one recovered from Burial 59 in Mound

II, but excavation notes did not describe the burial. Both Burial 81and Burial 85 contained a single shell bead: Burial 81 notes described a columella shell bead buried near teeth, and Burial 85 contained one shell bead buried with a few teeth and bone fragments. Burial 89 contained an extended burial of an indeterminate individual buried with a celt and a projectile point.

Mound C Grave Goods

Before I begin an analysis of the burial patterns from each level and overall, I want to describe the grave goods recorded. Grave goods described in Mound C can be divided up into six material categories: pottery, shell, stone, bone, wood, and copper. Shell was the most common grave good, followed by stone, pottery, and bone. Copper and wood occurred less frequently. The following section describes and quantifies the grave goods in these prehistoric burials.

About 88% of the pottery excavated from Ocmulgee was Bibb Plain type. Bibb Plain was characterized as smooth, but not polished, predominantly red-brown pottery with plain exteriors (Fairbanks 2003:43, 79). Fairbanks described the ceramic style at Ocmulgee as "drab and uninspired" for such a large site, but the lack of interest in pottery decoration did not signify a lack of cultural complexity (Fairbanks 2003:40). Excavators recovered 8,251 sherds and 5 whole or reconstructed pots from the entire site. More than half of the Bibb Plain pottery from the Macon Plateau was grit tempered, another 40% was shell tempered, and only 5% was both grit and shell tempered. Other clay objects found included human or bird effigies and a clay pipe (Fairbanks 2003:43, 84).

The remaining pottery of the Macon Plateau included Halstead Plain, Macon Thick, McDougal Plain, Hawkins Fabric Marked, and Brown's Mount Plain (Fairbanks 2003:84), though Halstead Plain and Bibb Plain were the only pottery types specifically named in Mound

C grave goods. Halstead Plain pottery in Mound C included 2 effigy bottles and one human effigy located in the adjacent Village Site. Bibb Plain pottery included bottles and jars (Fairbanks 2003:Plates 17 and 18).

Shell objects included beads, gorgets, shell dippers or cups, and whole shells. Whole conch shells and cups were recovered from Mound C. These cups were plain and undecorated conch shells, unlike those commonly associated with the Southern Cult and "Black Drink" (Fairbanks 2003:46). Like Bibb Plain pottery, the shell work from the Macon Plateau was also generally plain. Four types of shell beads were found in Macon Plateau burials: olivella beads, conch shell beads, marginella beads, and flat, barrel-shaped beads (Fairbanks 2003:46). Both Burials 38 and 69 featured a single conch shell placed over the individuals. Burials that contained thousands of beads scattered on and around the individuals could indicate beaded clothing or wraps. Shell gorgets were found in two burials, one in the sub-mound and one in the Village Site. At least one of those gorgets was made from conch shell (Fairbanks 2003:22).

Very few bone objects were found in the burials. The lack of bone objects could be the result of environmental or cultural factors. Environmentally, extremely acidic clay soils, heavy rainfall, and high temperatures at Ocmulgee contributed to poor bone preservation. Culturally, if bone objects were made in this environment, they were most likely only used for decorative or ornamental use, rather than utilitarian use (Fairbanks 2003:47). The only bone grave goods recorded were bone pins in Burial 69 of the sub-mound level (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV).

Stone objects in Mound C included projectile points, celts, an adz, mullers, and "discoidals," or chunkey stones (Fairbanks 2003:Plate 21). Stone grave goods occurred in as many burials as pottery goods, but not as often as shell materials. The mullers, discussed later in

Chapter 4, were an interesting tool inclusion in an otherwise decorative grave good deposit. The chunkey stones of sub-mound Burial 69 do not appear elsewhere in the Mound.

Metal and wood both occurred infrequently in Mound C burials. The only metal associated with the Macon Plateau phase was copper. Burial 57 contained the only copper grave goods in Mound C; however, another set of copper adornments, similar in style, was found in Mound D, the Cornfield Mound (Fairbanks 2003:16-17). Wooden grave materials included posts, log tombs, and bark coverings, though most wood materials were in complete decay by the time of excavation and could not be definitively identified (Fairbanks 2003:47, 84).

CHAPTER 4
BURIAL PATTERNS

In the 79 burials studied, a minimum of 98 individuals were identified. Of those 98 individuals, 15 were adult males, 2 were adult females, 23 were adults of indeterminate age, 9 were children, 7 were juveniles, one was a male of indeterminate age, and 43 individuals were both unaged and unsexed. The Mound C demographics were predominantly adult and male; however, only a small portion of individuals could be both aged and sexed, so this pattern exists in a very small available sample.

Issues with Skeletal Identification

One of the biggest challenges I encountered during my research of Mound C was the lack of skeletal data. I began my research looking exclusively at Fairbanks' mortuary data from *The Archaeology of the Funeral Mound* (2003 [1956]). He compiled this report based on field notes and reports from the 1930s excavations, which were sometimes incomplete or lacking detailed description. In addition to unreliable skeletal analysis in field notes, the extremely acidic soil of the Macon Plateau led to very poor bone preservation. The acidity was said to even "alter the surface of stone artifacts" (Hally 1994:116). Even if remains were documented and removed from the field, poor provenience control in institutional storage led to more identification issues. The skeletal remains of 23 individuals removed from Ocmulgee and housed in the Smithsonian lack provenience documentation, and so cannot be associated with any specific burial (Hally 1994:116). From excavation notes and photographs, Fairbanks was able to describe almost completely the burial form (extended, flexed, or bundled), mound level, and pit number associated with a given burial, but lacked age and sex data for many of the individuals.

While many of the burials in Mound C were reassessed and given more accurate age, sex, and pathological information, less than half of the total burials studied could not be given any estimates.

Burial Patterns by Mound Level

Burial Type

The two main burial types in Mound C were primary and secondary burials, with some evidence of cremation in Burials 40, 46, and 82. Burials described as primary contained a body buried very shortly after death; there was no burial treatment of bone-handling or rearticulation of bones. Secondary burials included burials that exhibited rearticulated bones or bundled bones. These burials are considered secondary because the primary interment would have been exhumed, possibly treated or rearranged, and then reburied.

A seriation graph (Figure 4) tracks the changes in burial types throughout Mound C construction.[10] The most obvious pattern is that secondary burials were most prominent in the sub-mound level, but made a swift decrease through Mound II. Also notable is the periodic increase and decrease of the primary burials, and increasing the number of secondary burials from Mound II to Mound V. Every level except Mounds VI and VII contained a mixture of primary and secondary burials.

Fairbanks noted a pattern seen throughout mound levels of one extended and one bundled burial in the same interment (Fairbanks 2003:32). While there were plenty of instances of extended and bundle burials occurring together, the extended burials were often rearticulated and

[10] Figure 4 only includes chronologically definite mound levels. Levels not associated with specific periods of construction, which includes New Sod, Old Sod, Group I, Group II, and Village, were excluded from this graph. Burials with no recorded type (primary, secondary, or cremation) were also excluded.

considered secondary burials. Burials 12 and 24 were the only two burials where both primary and secondary burials were interred together. Field notes stated that most bundle burials in Mound C had few, if any, associated burial objects (SEAC 1934:34).

	Primary	Secondary	Cremation
Mound VII	I		
Mound VI		III	
Mound -V/V	IIII	IIIIIIIII	
Mound IV	IIIII	III	
Mound III	II	II	I
Mound II	IIII	II	
Sub-mound	II	IIIIIIIIIIIII	

Figure 4. Seriation graph showing burial type by mound level. Each hash mark represents one individual.

Burial Position

In the previous section, I described burial types (primary, secondary, cremated, and unknown) by mound level. I now want to describe the different burial positions represented in the mound levels. Burial positions include extended burials (both primary and secondary), bundle burials, flexed or partially flexed burials, and unknown burials. I identified extended burials as either primary or secondary burials that were laid out in anatomical order (or mimicking that arrangement, as in rearticulated extended burials). Bundle burials were secondary burials that contained remains in either individual bundles or larger piles of comingled remains. Flexed burials arranged individuals on their side in a crouching or fetal position, with the legs

flexed under the body. Unknown burials were either not described during excavation or were too deteriorated to identify a burial position.

Figure 5 graphs the distribution of burial positions by mound level. Extended burials occur most often in the sub-mound level, but decrease through subsequent levels. In contrast, bundled burials increase to Mound -V/V and then sharply decrease in Mounds VI and VII. Only one flexed burial was recorded for Mound -V/V, and unknown burials were identified in Mound II, Mound IV, and Mound -V/V. Most levels had both bundled and extended burials, except levels Mound II, Mound VI, and Mound VII.

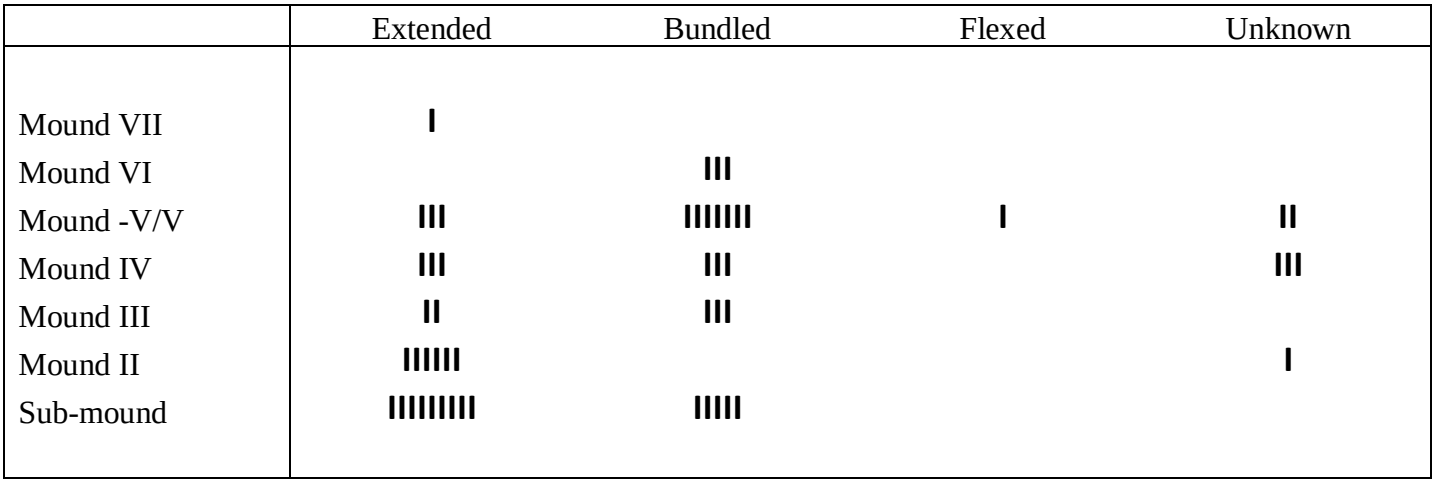

Figure 5. Seriation graph showing the distribution of burial positions by mound level. Each hash mark represents one individual.

Grave Goods

I described in Chapter 3 the different grave good materials in Mound C: stone, bone, shell, pottery, metal, and wood. Here I provide an analysis of those materials by mound level. Figure 6 graphs the distribution of grave goods by mound level.

Sub-mound. The sub-mound level had the most burials with shell goods, including shell beads, a shell gorget, and a conch dipper. The volume of shell beads in sub-mound burials

suggests that individuals were wrapped in beaded cloth or wearing beaded adornments at burial, and the conch dipper could be associated with the "Black Drink" of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (Fairbanks 2003:46). Burial 69 of the sub-mound included the only discoidals (or chunkey stones) and bone pins in Mound C burials.[11] Overall, sub-mound burials were the most elaborate and richly decorated in the mound.

	Bone Pins	Pottery	Wood	Chunkey Stones	Shell Beads	Conch Shell	Mullers	Shell Gorget	Celt	Copper	Mussel Shell
Mound -V/V										II	
Mound IV						I	III				
Mound III		I									I
Mound II		II	I		II						
Sub-mound	III			II	IIII	I		I	I		

Figure 6. Seriation graph showing grave goods by mound level. Each hash mark represents one object. For shell beads, one hash mark represents one lot of beads.

Mound II. Pottery first appeared in burials in the second construction level. Two burials contained pottery, including an "unfired clay mass" and a Halstead Plain bottle (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV). Two burials contained shell beads, but in a much lower quantity than the sub-mound burials. Burial 67 featured an individual with shell beads around the legs, indicating a type of shell leg apparel or jewelry. A shredded white substance identified as wood was recorded

[11] Plate 21 (Fairbanks, p. 68) features a "large stone discoidal" from the village area. No burial number or find number is listed.

in Burial 77. Mound II grave goods were underwhelming compared to the elaborate nature of the previous sub-mound burials. The Halstead Plain bottle, which probably held liquid for ritual use (Fairbanks 2003:27), was the most notable grave good.

Mound III. Grave goods occurred even less frequently in the third construction level. Burial 40 contained the only grave goods of Mound III: a small, polished Bibb Plain jar at the center of the burial and a mussel shell (Fairbanks 2003:28, Table IV).

Mound IV. Burials in the fourth construction level were the first and only burials to contain stone mullers, or "rubbing rocks" (SEAC 1931-1936:77). Burials 38 and 62 both contained muller stones with single, extended individuals. In Burial 38, the muller and a conch shell were placed above the bones, and Burial 62 contained 2 muller stones and 4 pebbles (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV), though field notes describe the "pebbles" as 2 pieces of possible copper ore and 2 pieces of flint rock (SEAC 1931-1936:77). Worked pieces of stone are uncommon in Mound C, as are tools. The mullers are an interesting inclusion in a mound otherwise filled with non-utilitarian decorative and ritual objects.

Mound -V and Mound V. No grave goods were recorded for Mound -V. Mound V featured the only burial with metal goods. Burial 57 contained copper-covered puma jaws and grooved copper plates with a radiating sun design (Fairbanks 2003:Plate 23). Some type of matting and fur were present in the burial, but all other grave good materials were absent. Copper goods only appeared in Mound V.

Mound VI and Mound VII. No grave goods were recorded for either level.

Group I and Group II. No grave goods were recorded for Group I. Group II grave goods were limited, if even described. One burial contained decayed wood that Fairbanks labeled as "grave good" (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV). The other burial, Burial 87, was listed as containing

grave goods, but field notes and sketches make no mention of finds or burial furniture (SEAC 1931-1936:126; SEAC 1934:86-89). It was probably incorrectly recorded.

New Sod and Old Sod. Similarly, Burial 47 of the New Sod level was listed as containing grave goods, but field notes (SEAC 1934:33) specifically stated that no burial furniture was found. New Sod burials featured a Bibb Plain bottle and jar, shell beads, 2 mussel-shell spoons, and one projectile point. Although this level is undefined in terms of mound-construction chronology, the presence of characteristic Bibb Plain pottery firmly dates it to the Macon Plateau phase. The Old Sod yielded less grave goods, only featuring some disc shell beads and 4 Bibb Plain sherds (Fairbanks 2003:34, Table IV).

No Level. Five burials with no recorded level contained grave goods. Two burials contained goods similar in form to grave goods identified in recorded levels. Burial 14 featured shell beads placed along the legs and neck, indicating a burial wrap, jewelry, or other adornment (SEAC 1933-1934:40), like those in the sub-mound level and Mound II. Also found was a pot only described as having a "peculiar design" (SEAC 1931-1936:10). Burial 76 contained another Halstead Plain effigy bottle, almost identical in form to the one found in Burial 59 of Mound II (Fairbanks 2003:Plate 17). Burials 81 and 85 each contained a lone shell bead with no other grave goods, and Burial 89 contained a projectile point (Fairbanks 2003:Table IV).

Burial Frequency

From Mound II to Mound IV, the number of burials included in each level remained relatively constant, increasing or decreasing by only one or two burials between levels (Figure 7). If Mound -V and Mound V are considered together as one level, that signifies a dramatic increase in burial activity. In this sense, Mound -V/V was the "peak" of burial activity and

mound construction. The swift decline in burial activity in the final two construction levels could be representative of the decline and abandonment of the Macon Plateau.

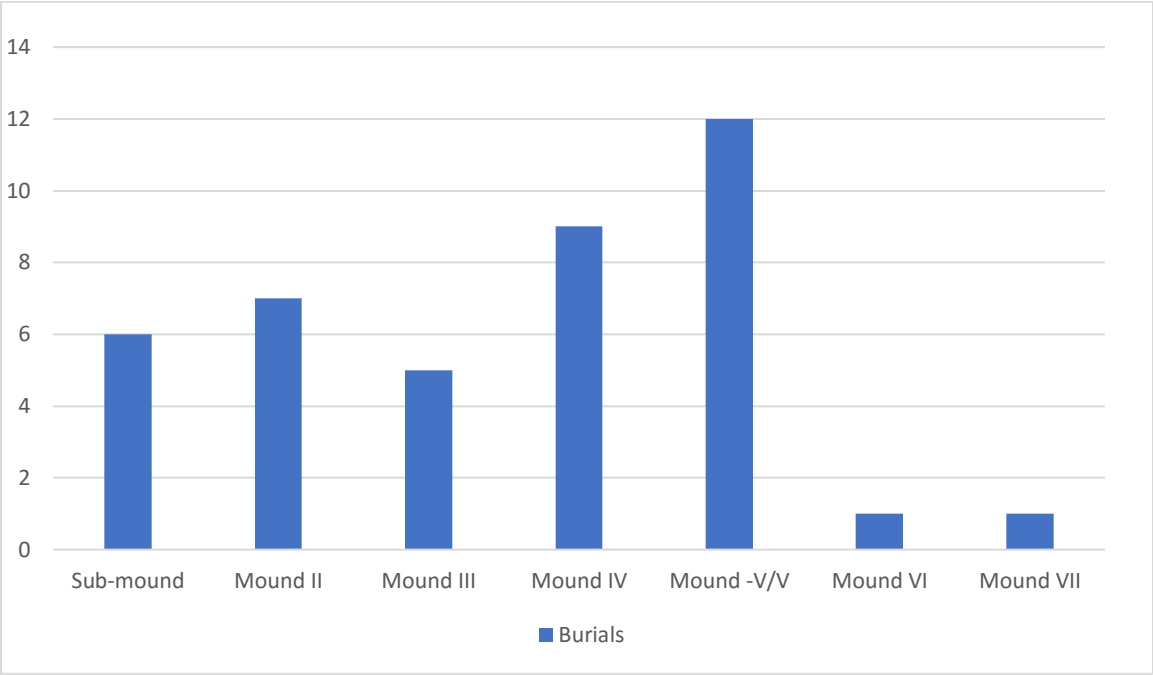

Figure 7. Total number of burials by mound level. Excludes Group I & II, New and Old Sod, and the Village Site because those levels do not have definite chronological dates for construction.

Burial Patterns Overall

Age and Sex

Table 14, modeled after Saxe (1971:Table 2), lists the age and sex of all 98 individuals studied. Individuals could be grouped into one of seven age groups: advanced adult (40+), mid-adult (25-40), young adult (18-25), adult (no age estimate associated), juvenile (13-18), child (0-12), and indeterminate (no age). Sex could be listed as male, probable male, female, probable female, or indeterminate. More than half of the individuals could be aged, but 83% could not be

assigned sex estimates. Even without complete sex information, there was a notable difference between the numbers of males and females in the mound.

Table 14. Age and Sex Totals.

	Advanced Adult	Mid-Adul	Adul	Young Adul	Juvenile	Child	Indeterminate	Sub-group Totals	Group Totals	Percent
Male	1	3	1	3	0	0	0	8	15	15%
Probable Male	3	2	0	0	1	0	1	7		
Female	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2%
Probable Female	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Indeterminate	2	2	16	3	6	9	43	81	81	83%
Totals	6	8	18	6	7	9	44		98	

Burial Type

Of the 98 Mound C individuals studied, 42 were interred in primary burials, 44 were interred in secondary burials, 9 were not assigned a burial type[12], and 3 were possibly cremated (Hally 1994:Table 11.2). Table 15 shows the percent of individuals by burial type. Primary and secondary burials occur at a near-even percentage in Mound C.

Table 15. Count and Percent of Burial Types, Overall.

	Primary	Secondary	Cremated	Unknown	Total
Count	42	44	3	9	98
Percent	43%	45%	3%	9%	100%

[12] Burials not assigned a burial type usually resulted from fragmentary or eroded remains or poorly described field notes (Based on Table 11.1, Hally 1994:117-119).

Burial Position

Table 16 shows the number and percent of individuals buried in each position. Half of the burials in Mound C were extended, roughly a third were buried in bundles, and less than a sixth were flexed or had no known burial position. Although primary and secondary burials appeared at almost the same number within the mound, a larger gap exists between extended and bundle burials. This gap is explained by the presence of several secondary extended, or rearticulated, burials.

Table 16. Count and Percent of Burial Positions, Overall.

	Extended	Bundle	Flexed	Unknown	Total
Count	49	34	6	9	98
Percent	50%	35%	6%	9%	100%

Grave Goods

I created a diagram based on an image from Andrew Sherratt (1982) that plots grave goods by age and/or sex (Figure 8). Individuals identified as "Adult," "Juvenile," or "Child" only, with no age or sex estimation, are included below the male/female graph. Not every burial contained grave goods. Several burials with age and sex information do not contain grave goods, and those that do contain multiple grave goods, like Burial 69, contain multiple interments.

I divided the grave goods into 9 categories: bone pins, pottery, wood, chunkey stones, shell beads, conch shells (includes conch shell "dippers" or cups), mullers, shell gorgets, and celts. Several other grave good types like projectile points and copper adornments were not

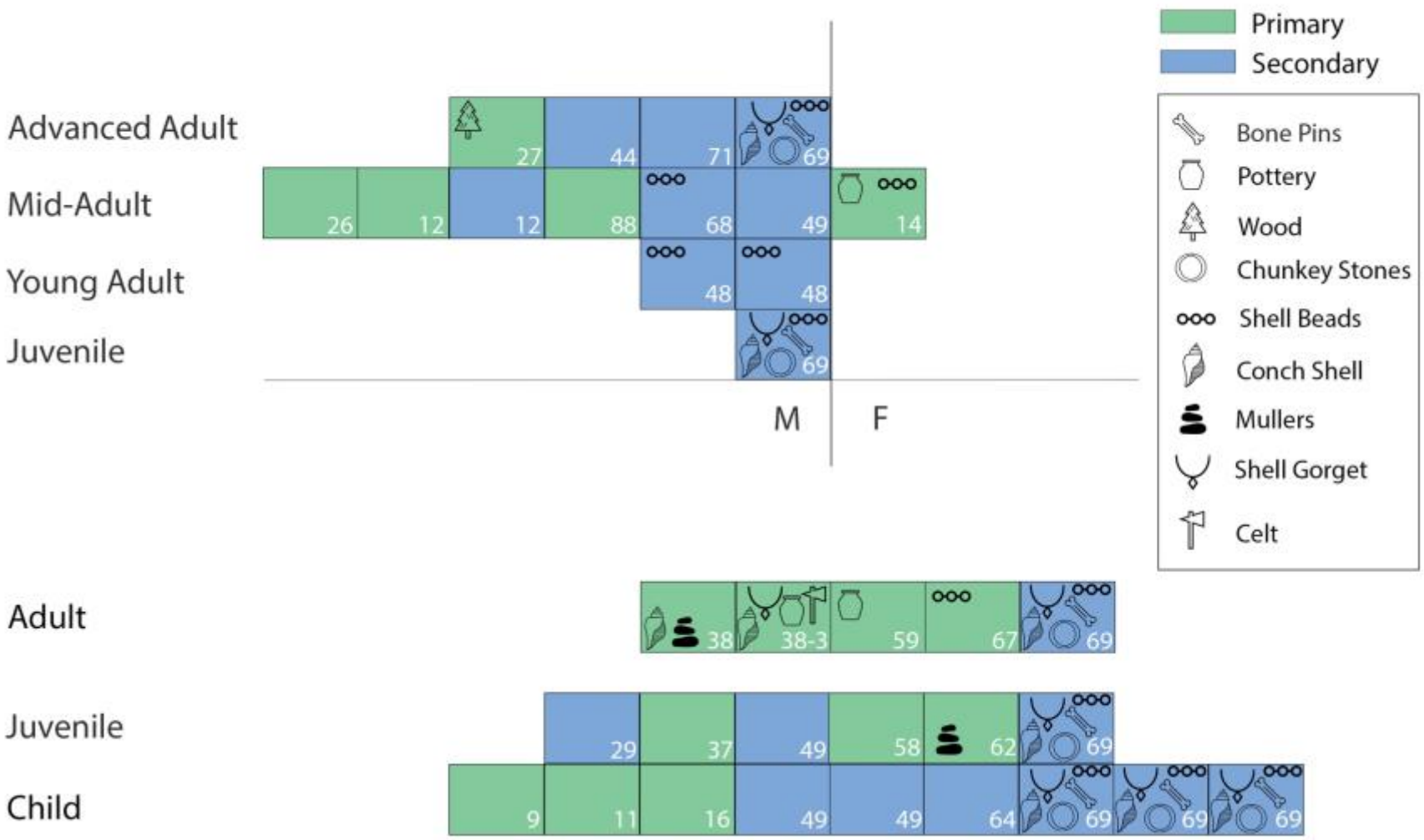

Figure 8. Sherratt diagram of burial goods by age and sex. Green boxes represent primary burials, and blue boxes represent secondary burials. Section labeled "Adult" includes all individuals that could only be aged as adult without a specific age range. Adult, Juvenile, and Child sections below the male/female chart could not be sexed.

included because individuals in those burials could not be aged or sexed. The diagram shows several interesting patterns in grave good burials. First, shell beads occur in both male and female burials, and they also appear in burials of all ages. Second, Burial 69 is easily identifiable as one of the richest burials for its grave good variety. It also is the only Mound C burial to contain chunkey stones and bone pins. Third, pottery is not associated with any males, but it is included in the single female burial on the diagram. Finally, the burials with the most varied grave goods each contain a conch shell and shell gorget. Burial 69 of the sub-mound and Burial 38-3 of the Village Site each have at least 4 different types of grave goods included in burial.

Pathological Patterns

I will briefly describe the pathological patterns existing in the prehistoric burials, although I do not intend to make a detailed bioarchaeological analysis of the individuals. Dental pathology of any type was the most recorded pathological condition. It included carious lesions, antemortem tooth loss, and hypoplastic defects. Hypoplasia was most common among juveniles. A total of 2 adults, 5 juveniles, and 2 children exhibited slight to moderate hypoplasia. Carious lesions were less common, but were identified in 1 adult, 1 juvenile, and 2 children. Antemortem tooth loss was only recorded for three adults, no children or juveniles.

Other pathological conditions included trauma, arthritis, and infection. Only two individuals showed evidence of trauma, the adult male in Burial 68 and one juvenile in Burial 69, but the trauma was mild and non-fatal. Three adults showed evidence of mild to severe arthritis, and two adults and one juvenile showed evidence of infections. In total, 20 individuals were listed with pathological conditions, with adults making up more than half that sample.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF BURIAL PATTERNS

In this final section, I will interpret the Mound C burial patterns based on burial demographics and statistics listed in Chapter 4, and I will apply modern Mississippian mortuary theory to these burial patterns.

Mound Burials: Who is Included, and Who is Missing?

The inclusion of a wide range of ages and sexes in Mound C burials could be an indication of ascribed status by birth or descent group, rather than achieved status. In Lewis Larson's study of social stratification at Etowah, he described a lack of craft or occupation tools as evidence of an ascribed status system (1970:66). Aside from the stone mullers in Mound IV, there is a noticeable lack of tools in the Mound C burials, despite high-volume shell bead production and less frequent projectile point production. By Larson's reasoning, these Mound C individuals would represent what Larson described as "a descent group set apart from other such groups in the society" (Larson 1970:67).

In Pauketat's chapter "Missing Persons in Mississippian Mortuaries," he avoids the typical approach of identifying who is buried in mounds, and rather questions, "Who is missing?" (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:25). Using Cahokia's Mound 72 as an example, Pauketat reasoned that an interment of several women and children in Mound 72, lacking any male counterparts, meant that the women represented the "reproductive members of some honored but rival kin group" (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:25), sacrificed all at once. If we apply Pauketat's "who's missing" strategy to Mound C, it is most noticeable that women are almost completely

missing from Mound C. Only two Mound C burials contained females, and only one of those burials (Burial 14) was subject to more accurate age and sex estimates at the Smithsonian.

Identifying Important Burials

I originally named this section "Identifying Important Individuals," but realized that the importance or status reflected in a burial could have little to do with the actual individual buried. Instead of looking for important individuals, it makes more sense to identify important burials, because the people interred could have had more importance as an ideological symbol than as an individual. "Important" burials include those with elaborate or varied grave goods, or high-volume goods that required extensive craft labor or non-local material.

The number of individuals buried in Mound V combined with the elaborate copper burial goods of Burial 57 suggest a burial of importance. Copper materials are not seen anywhere else in the mound, except in a single burial associated with Mound D (Fairbanks 2003:46). The increase in burials in these levels could be explained as retainer burials for Burial 57. Field notes do not feature any sketches of Burial 57.

Another important burial is Burial 69 of the sub-mound level. It has a variety of grave good types with at least seven secondary interments, both rearticulated extended and bundled. This burial is important because it shows a very obvious arrangement of the individuals in a level characterized by high volume grave goods and rearticulated burials. Burial 69 contained 26,000 marine olivella shell beads along with other shell goods, chunkey stones, bone pins, and a celt. The volume of shell beads suggests that the individuals were either wearing beaded apparel or wrapped in a beaded cloth. Figure 9 shows how the burials were arranged with a large conch

shell on top. Both conch and olivella shells are marine shells; their presence in central Georgia indicates that the Macon Plateau people likely had trade networks that extended to the coast.

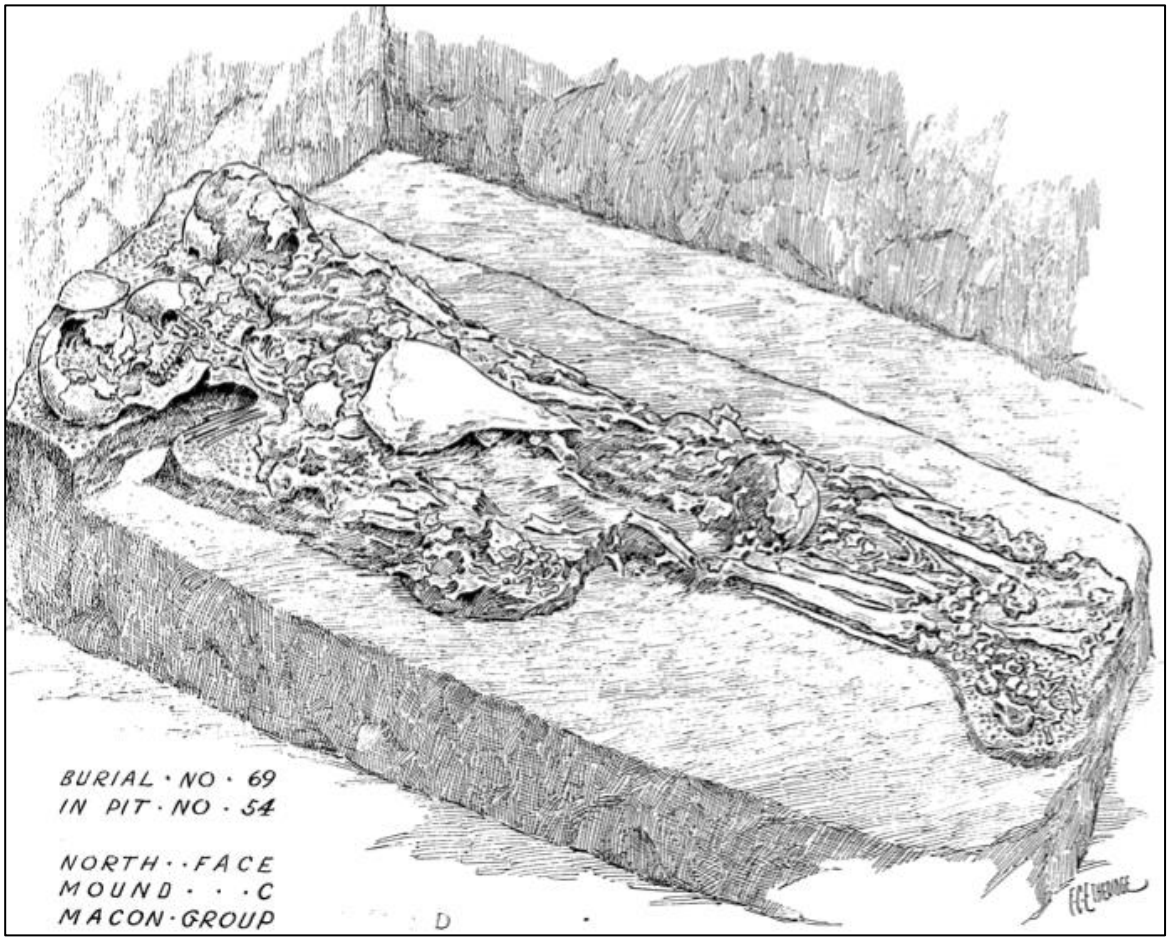

Figure 9. Sketch of Burial 69 of the sub-mound level. Three extended individuals were buried on top of four bundled individuals. Sketch #27, SEAC ACC 123 Vol. 2.

I also believe that Burial 38-3 of the Village Site represents an important burial for its varied grave good assemblage and its possible connection to the sub-mound level. Burial 38-3 contained a single individual buried with five different categories of grave goods: pottery, shell gorgets, celt, mussel shell, and a clay pipe. Field notes stated a possible chronological connection between the Village Site and the sub-mound burials (SEAC 1934:23-24). I think the inclusion of several grave goods, including shell gorgets and Bibb Plain pottery, more closely associate

Burial 38-3 with the sub-mound burials. There are few burials outside the sub-mound level that display such varied grave goods.

Finally, Burial 14 should be considered as a burial of importance as the only burial to include a female with grave goods. This burial contained a mid-adult probable female buried with more than 400 shell beads along the neck and legs and a single pot. Burial 14 was recorded with no mound level, but the arrangement of beads is similar to sub-mound and Mound II burials. These beads likely belonged to a necklace or burial wrap. As the only female burial with grave goods, it is hard to establish a pattern of goods based solely on sex, but it is important to note that no identifiable males were buried with pottery. A sketch of the burial shows the arrangement of the bones but not the in-situ location of burial goods (Figure 10).

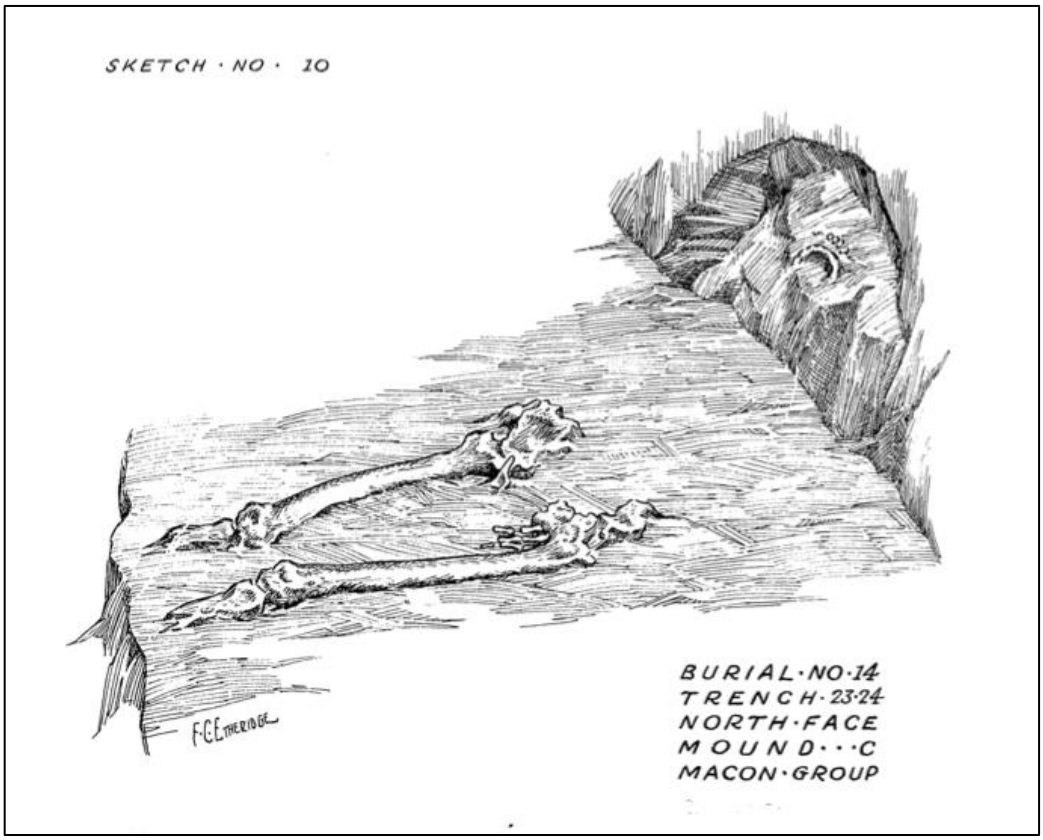

Figure 10. Sketch of Burial 14. This burial was not recorded with a specific mound level. Sketch #10, SEAC ACC 123 Vol. 2.

Secondary Burials

I began my research looking for answers to the large amount of secondary burials in Mound C. After reading several different theories and comparing the burial patterns with these ideas, I believe there are three possible explanations for the secondary burials. They could have been used as "cosmological displays," existed as products of charnel house-type mound structures, or resulted from ritual bone-handling and reburial by living kin group. I do not think these three theories are mutually exclusive, as it is possible that each burial approach existed at some point during the early Mississippian occupation. Each of these three possibilities will now be discussed in turn.

Secondary Burials as Cosmological Displays

The first explanation describes the secondary burials as cosmological displays, or burial arrangements that reflected the stories or ideas of universal origin or creation (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:30, 32). Cosmological layouts could be constructed using secondary burials, specifically sub-mound burials where multiple secondary burials appear and are accompanied by one primary burial. For example, there are very noticeable similarities between the sub-mound burial organizations of Mound C and Mound 72 at Cahokia. First, both sub-mound levels contained burials with "gaming artifacts" (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:32), associated with the Mississippian Twin Brothers myth. Sub-Mound C was the only level to contain two chunkey stone game pieces (Burial 69) and contained one double burial of adult males (Burial 48 A & B) buried with elaborate shell-beaded jewelry or apparel that could have represented the Twin Brothers. Second, almost every burial in both sub-mound levels were secondary and rearticulated. This implied that the organization and planning of the burial display was created

and carried out independently of the individuals' deaths (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:33). The rearticulation of secondary burials indicates that these individuals were likely used as tools for reinforcing the group's ideological beliefs through elaborate burial displays.

Mound-top Structures or Charnel Houses

The second explanation of secondary burials describes the individuals as products of charnel house storage. Mound C levels of sub-mound, Mound III, and Mound V all featured postholes of some structure, but because mound-top postholes at Ocmulgee were never mapped, it is impossible to definitively say what type of structures existed on the platforms. The amount of burial activity in Mound C and the inclusion of so many secondary burials suggests that the structure was related to the mound's burial functions, possibly as a charnel house or ritual structure. If it was a charnel house, that would explain the partially or fully decayed remains present in several burials.

Ritual Bone-Handling and Reburial

The third and final explanation for secondary burials is that they were a tool for reinforcing the status of living kin. Ritual reburial and bone-handling of deceased kin had as much to do with increasing the honor or prestige of the living kin members as it did with honoring the dead members (Sullivan and Mainfort 2010:5, 33). Through ritual bone-handling, members of a descent group could honor themselves and the deceased in an elaborate reburial ceremony that could have included cremation, bone cleaning, and bone painting (SEAC 1931-1936:90). Although many secondary burials lacked grave goods, I believe the ritual reburial

process itself showed distinction in society. Defining the ritual process, however, is more difficult, as burials only show us the terminal part of the ritual process.

Conclusions

Fairbanks made several summary points about Ocmulgee site emergence and organization. He supported the theory of non-local invasion on the Macon Plateau, and he stated that the social system was "expressed in…platform mounds, large towns, fortifications, insignia of rank, and large populations." Fairbanks described the burial complex at Ocmulgee as featuring "platform mounds; multiple burials, bone cleaning; burial offerings of ornaments, tools, and food…and possibly retainer burials with chiefs" (2003:55). I will add my own observations to Fairbanks' and suggest that Ocmulgee represented the beginnings of early Mississippian organization through cosmologically-arranged secondary burials, established hierarchy by kin group, and a predominantly male elite group or occupation.

The people buried in Mound C represent a group of high status, likely set apart from others in society based on kin group. These groups included adults and subadults of all ages and both sexes, though adult males appeared most prominently. Their bodies were used in ritual bone-handling or reburials by living kin to emphasize their own claims to higher status. The Mound C burials tells us nothing about how these individuals viewed themselves, but rather how they fit into the social hierarchy, as viewed by the people burying them, or how they filled an ideological role in a burial display.

The combination of poor skeletal preservation and provenience control, confused or incomplete field notes, and fragmentary remains make a complete burial analysis of Mound C difficult. A minority of burials could be both aged and sexed, but the available information

showed slight patterns in burial position, burial type, age, and sex. I believe a more complete study of the Macon Plateau, including the other seven mounds and earthlodge, their relative dates, and their relationships to one another, is necessary to understand the full political function of Ocmulgee. I think Ocmulgee has great research value as an early Mississippian site that both fits and contradicts many typical Mississippian characteristics.

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